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Anastasia Lomagina

St. Petersburg State University

KAREN BLIXEN READS THE SAGA OF OLAF TRYGGVASON: RECEPTION OF THE SAGA AND NARRATIVE STRATEGIES IN “THE BEAR AND THE KISS”

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The article analyses the reception of the Norse sagas in Karen Blixen's short story “The Bear and the Kiss” written in 1958 with the main focus on the “saga of Olaf Tryggvason”. Drawing on Wolfgang Iser's reception theory, the article explores the hierarchy of the pre-texts that are traceable in the text of the considered story and suggests a system of markers that are meant to include interaction with the precedent texts. The typology of markers includes the characters' names, metaphorical use of mythological or historical personas, the identified cited texts or stories, identical attributes (in this particular text — a glove thrown into a person's face), the characters' appearance, and similarity or contrast with the storyline of the other unidentified text. The analysis shows that there are two possible effects of the use of references: semantic compression and, conversely, symbolist and Neoplatonic circling around the event, which creates a semantic gap. The reader can either find himself aware of a riddle yet being unable to understand how the events or reactions fit into the plot or assume the role of an investigator creating his own interpretation of the storyline. The examined strategy of circling around the truth in order to indicate an idea or a fact by using metaphors, comparisons, and allusions in combination with Walter Benjamin's and Edward Forster's philosophy of oral storytelling allows Blixen's short stories to fit neatly into the context of European modernism.

Keywords: Karen Blixen, reception, Norse sagas, narrative strategy, intertextuality, Walter Benjamin, Edward Forster, aesthetics of symbolism, Friedrich Schiller “The Glove”.

Karen Blixen (1885–1962) is one of the most well-studied Danish writers, her literary legacy thoroughly analyzed in numerous volumes of *Blixeniana* (a series published by the Society bearing her name), dissertations, articles, and books. The existing research devoted to her short stories reveals considerable agreement on the main features typical of her prose: orientation on the oral tradition, abundance of references to various earlier texts, irony, and ambivalence of her stories allowing for multiple interpretations.

Drawing on the reception theory and Wolfgang Iser's notion of the implied reader, this article seeks to establish a hierarchy of pre-texts in the short story "The Bear and the Kiss" (1958), published first in 1975 in the posthumous edition of the *Carnival. Entertainments and Posthumous Tales*, to propose a possible interpretation of their inter-relation in the above-mentioned short story, to describe the system of markers that make the literary and historical allusions interplay with the storyline as well as identify the author's reception of the saga of Olaf Tryggvason — one of Blixen's most favorite sagas.

The abundance of citations, her ironic polemic with the earlier texts cited by her, allusions to paintings and historical anecdotes are rightly explained by some researchers as an outgrowth of the Neoplatonic worldview at the turn of the century exemplified by the Symbolist writers and their attempt to penetrate the spiritual world of ideas, to express the supersensory essence of the world using imagery [Man'kovskaya, 2012]. In her article about the interrelation between Blixen's short stories and the aesthetics of French Symbolism, namely, Stéphane Mallarmé, Barbara Gabriel writes about the silence and the blank page as a manifestation of Mallarmé's principle of ambivalence: "those blanks in his texts which foreground absence and incompleteness" [Gabriel, 1994, p. 100].

The principle of correspondence proposed by the French Symbolists makes it possible to invent aesthetic forms for the sake of stirring the reader's aesthetic emotions without copying the outside world. In uniting these forms there is always a theme calling upon the spiritual sphere of existence and it is these forms that ultimately manifest the theme with the help of correspondences. Thus, the technique that Blixen uses to create her texts through imagery, citations, references to other writers' texts, tales, and myths, seeks not to name a phenomenon but to arouse it in the reader's mind with the help of metaphors, comparisons, and artis-

tic analogies. A phenomenon or an image becomes one of the countless multitudes of literary, musical, artistic, and sculptural reflections. Thus, Blixen's stories fit neatly into the context of European modernism.

Imitation of oral storytelling is another distinctive feature of the Danish writer's short stories. In one of the frequently cited interviews with Bent Mohn of the New York Times, given on November 3, 1957, the writer argues: "I am not a novelist, really not even a writer; I am a storyteller. One of my friends said about me that I think all sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them, and perhaps this is not entirely untrue. To me, the explanation of life seems to be its melody, its pattern. And I feel in life such an infinite, truly inconceivable fantasy" [Wilkinson, 2004].

On one hand, the narration in Blixen's short stories is centered around the oral tradition that implies a distinctive storytelling intonation, the use of migratory subjects and a specific storytelling rhythm. On the other hand, many researchers [Selboe, 2008; Steponavičiūtė, 2016] mention one more indispensable feature of the art of oral storytelling in the author's texts: the importance of experience and recollection as a driving force of the oral narrative. She uses it in the same way as in the language-centered concept of experience discussed in Walter Benjamin's essay "The Storyteller. Reflections on the Works of Nikolai Leskov": "the continuity of experience, die Erfahrung, is a fundamental condition for the transmission of oral stories" [Selboe, 2008, p. 20].

Experience and real-life situations as a pre-condition for the emergence of storytelling can be found in Blixen's short stories in two forms: first, as her own processed experience (a fire in the theater that caused the character of "The Dreamers" to lose her voice, creative patronage and a break up with Torkil Bjørnvig reflected in the later "Echoes") and, second, as an accumulated literary and folk experience of the predecessors. In her early piece "The Roads Round Pisa", the writer makes one of the characters vocalize the thought that literary characters seem to be more real than the Earth's inhabitants who are not recorded in literature or folk tales.

A similar thought is shared by Blixen's contemporary writer, a representative of the British Modernism and theorist, Edward Forster (1879–1970) who delivered a series of lectures on the theory of the novel that were published in 1927 in the theoretical treatise *Aspects of the Novel*. Speaking about characters of the novel Forster compares a created, fic-

titious character, and a human being (*homo fictus* and *homo sapiens*): “*Homo fictus* is more elusive than his cousin. He is created in the minds of hundreds of different novelists, who have conflicting methods of gestation, so one must not generalize”. In the same book, he formulates the principle of the narrator who is the absolute creator, the lord and master of the realm of the text and discusses the artistic and narrative component of the process of the divine creation of the Universe: we can know more about him (*homo fictus*) than we can know about any of our fellow creatures because his creator and narrator are one. Were we equipped for hyperbole we might exclaim at this point: “If God could tell the story of the Universe, the Universe would become fictitious” [Forster, 2010]. This idea is repeatedly reiterated in Blixen’s short stories and the image of God-Artist and Artist-God underlies the creative process in the writer’s artistic world. Her characters such as Prince Potenziani from “The Roads Round Pisa” realize the extent to which God’s design transcends their own understanding and the writer Charlie Despard from “The Young Man with the Carnation” promises God to write only about what he would bestow upon him in the form of sensory and emotional experience.

Blixen’s claim that she is fundamentally “a storyteller, not even a writer or novelist” can have one more possible explanation. In *Aspects of the Novel*, Forster distinguishes between the “plot” and the “story”, arguing that the “story” is a sequence of events while the “plot” is a causal narrative of these events implying a cause-and-effect relationship between the actions.

Indeed, the meaning and interrelation between the events and reactions of the characters in the writer’s short stories often appear obscure and seemingly difficult to explain. Her “story” is a series of events that the reader will have to put together and recreate the links that are left missing in the narrative to discover the hidden motives and patterns. One of the characters of her first collection of short stories *Seven Gothic Tales*, the storyteller Mira Jama, says a phrase that appears to be addressed to the readers of all the writer’s texts: “I will give you no explanation. You must take in whatever you can, and leave the rest outside. It is not a bad thing in a tale that you understand only half of it” [Blixen, 1986, p. 236].

By placing her characters in the situations repeating the plots of earlier texts and by using the citations from other works to describe the inner state of her protagonists, Blixen fits her texts in the succession of

classical stories ranging from the Bible, the Icelanders' sagas and One Thousand and One Nights to the 19th and 20th century texts of Søren Kierkegaard, Luigi Pirandello, Guy de Maupassant, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson.

Norse sagas appear to be a frequently used source of citation for the writer. Many researchers note that such features of Blixen's prose as a dispassionate intonation of the narrative providing just a mere record of events, the lack of value judgments on behalf of the narrator, and the description of external expression of emotions by the characters without explaining their nature stem from the tradition of oral storytelling, in particular, the Icelanders' sagas. An in-depth analysis of the interrelation between the text of the Saga of St. Olaf from the *Heimskringla* and the unfinished short story by Blixen "Grjotgard Ålvesøn og Aud" is provided in the article by Ieva Steponavičiūtė "Saga Reflections in Karen Blixen's Texts (with a focus on Grjotgard Ålvesøn Og Aud)". Many literary allusions are thoroughly traced in Bernhard Glienke's study of Blixen's mythology where "The Bear and the Kiss" is interpreted as "an aristocratic counter-story to the bourgeois ballad, a fairytale about learning to fear, love and believe" (die adlige Gegengeschichte zu einer bürgerlichen Ballade; das Märchen von einem der auszog, das Fürchten, die Liebe und den Glauben zu lernen) [Glienke, 1986, s. 265].

It is the references to the Olaf Tryggvason saga which Blixen most likely read in the 1900 translation by Frederik Winkel Horn that we can find more often than references to other sagas in her works. The fact of the writer's familiarity with the saga is revealed in her letter of 1928 where she shared her admiration for the oral folk tradition and the people who are capable of stimulating it, i. e., providing an occasion for composing:

"There are some artists and common people who are capable of giving rise to myths, their images remain in the public mind... songs continue to be composed about them. In the old times this happened to Olaf Tryggvason who, in fact, did not seem to be a great King, yet he was not even killed... he appeared as a vision to his people, he can arise from the dead in the modern poems and songs ("Broad the Sails o'er North Sea Go..."), and the people of today will feel personal grief... because "fallen is Olaf Tryggvason". (Der er nogle Kunstnere, og Mennesker... som har evnen til at "danne myte"; de bliver ved at leve i folkets bevidsthed som skikkelser, ikke alene i deres verker, og den særlige art af poesi, som de har repræsenteret... Saaledes ogsaa i gamle dage Olav Tryggvason, som dog vist i Grunden ikke var nogen stor konge, men som de ikke

engang rigtig kunne faa livet af... han viste sig i syner for sine mænd, og kan opstaa selv i moderne digt og sang i”Brede sejl over Nordsø gaar”, saaaledes at et moderne Publikum kan føle det som en personlig gru... at ”falden er Olav Trygvesson”) [Blixen, 1991, s. 197–198].

Thus, the writer views the saga as a variation of the recorded story of the deeds and death of King Olaf alongside the painting by Peter Nicolai Arbo featuring Olaf as he accepts the Norse Crown, Bjørnson’s and Edvard Grieg’s (1832–1910) song “Broad the Sails o’er North Sea Go...” (1880) and Longfellow’s “Saga of King Olaf” (1863).

In his essay “The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach” Iser argues that “a literary work is something more than just its written text because the text acquires its life only in the process of reading and the reading depends on the reader’s personality and this personality may, in turn, be affected by different levels of the text” [Iser, 1972, p. 16]. By acquiring meaning in the process of perception, the text repeatedly creates intervals of blanks.

It is only through the act of re-creating that an object becomes perceived as a work of art. The reading process is the most critical part of the process of getting acquainted with a literary work and it has several stages. The Reader “looks forward, looks back, decides, changes his decisions, forms expectations, is shocked by their non-fulfillment, questions...” [Iser, 1972, p. 16]. He is governed by two structural components of the text: first, by the set of familiar literary images and themes together with the references to the known social and historical situations; and second, by the strategies for presenting the familiar in contrast to the unfamiliar while in the case of Blixen it is rather in contrast to the recognizable. As early as in 1988 Jørgen de Myllius proposed a poignant definition of the writer’s genre of short stories calling them “parasitic” and “reflective modernist texts”.

“Det er karakteristisk for denne moderne fortælling, at den har brug for den simple klassiske beretning. Den omgiver sig med den kraft, den låner af den klassiske beretning, udstråler en illusion af at være selve denne tradition, men er i virkeligheden en på én gang parasitær og selvstændigt fornyende kunst.” (“It is typical for this kind of modernist story to require a classical narration. It takes strength from the classical narration and hides behind it, shines with the illusion pretending to be the same tradition but at the same time is parasitic and renewing”) [de Myllius, 2017, p. 137].

In the texts of her short stories Blixen creates a world where, according to the Neoplatonic ideas and Symbolist poetics, events and feelings have no direct correlation. Feelings, events, and relations from the world of ideas correspond to plot patterns, historical personas that once became characters of folk tales, ballads, and fiction. Thus, information is transmitted by means of association series and the reader's inner effort to recognize, decode, and interpret.

The storyline of "The Bear and the Kiss" features a journey to the Norwegian hinterland made by three young engineers in 1883 and a hunt in which they participated. A problem with their boat makes them stay over for a day on the remote coast of Norway. The youngest traveler's name is Bjørn (Bear). The men meet the local hermits: a one-legged strong and handsome man, a former bear hunter named Joshua and his wife, an old wrinkled Finnish woman Lahula who was baptized by the name of Mary Magdalene. Bjørn, Joshua, and Lahula are engaged in a relationship that remains obscure for both the other characters and the reader. In the evening Lahula repeatedly pesters Bjørn to go hunt a huge bear who lives in the mountains despite the objections of her husband who says that there is not a single chance of coming across a bear in the area. She seems to agree but continues to tell the young man about the hunt and talks her husband into giving Bjørn his shotgun. Early in the morning, the young man sets off for the hunt only to return completely exhausted, tattered, and dirty having killed no bear. The hostess asks him if he happened to see the beast and the man answers that he saw his shadow and heard him. His fellow travelers laugh at him. The hostess brings him some coffee and says that from then on, he will never be afraid of anything. Suddenly he kisses the old woman and she kisses him back, after which the young people head to their boat to continue the voyage. Each of them proposes his own version of what had happened that appears to be at odds with the versions of the others.

The events themselves comprise a modest share of the narrative. The reader's attention is focused on the gaps in the narrative, the blanks, and the unsaid. The main conundrum is connected with the hosts of the farmstead where the young people find themselves. Who are they? What makes them stay together? Why does the youngest traveler obediently set off for the bear hunt as the old host commands, but does not find it and begins to conduct himself very much like the farmstead host:

“he moved without a sound, aptly like Joshua himself” (*han rørte sig uden en lyd, luftigt som Josva selv*) [Blixen, 1994, p. 387].

Like most of Blixen's stories the main information for the reader is provided through the dialogues and encoded in the references to other texts. Thus, the story of Joshua and Lahula acquires different interpretations as told by different characters of the short story and due to allusions to various stories from the sagas of Olaf Tryggvason, Harald Fairhair, Böðvars þáttir in Hrólfr Kraki's saga, The Old and the New Testament, Friedrich Schiller's ballad “The Glove” and Homer's *The Odyssey*.

In the book *Understanding Isak Dinesen* Susan Brantly rightly notes that the allusions in the author's narrative give rise to a semantic compression of information based on the markers that arouse the reader's associations with other texts. Indeed, a comparison of the farmstead's host with Odysseus, Olaf Tryggvason, berserk, and bear suggests his heroic nature, strength, courage, and a dangerous personality. At the same time, the opposite is also true. In Blixen's texts, the things that are not named directly are denoted through a symbolic circling, with only a distinctive feature of the character to whom the text refers us provided as the key to a puzzle. Instead of saying that the host seems to turn into a bear at night, the author describes his behavior that exposes him as berserk (*man-bear*): “he roared as one of the bears killed by him” (*brølede den store Josva som en af sine egne bjørne*) [Blixen, 1994, p. 368], he has a “bear's strength of 12 men” (*matte han jo... have båret tolv mands styrke med sig.*) [Blixen, 1994, p. 382], he goes berserk, “turns over huge rocks and throws them in such a manner that sparks fly” (*han... tumlede med så store sten... så at gnisterne stod af dem*) [Blixen, 1994, p. 383]. And instead of saying that the host is jealous and afraid to lose the witch Lahula, the author includes a mirrored story of a jealous wife of the ship's captain who consumes herself out of jealousy till she becomes as little as a thumb.

The technique of using an extended metaphor to denote actions, feelings, and moods reminds here of the ancient Scandinavian metaphor — kenning, a compound that employs figurative language in place of a more concrete single-word noun but in the text has a strategy of symbolic circling, omitting the name of a specific phenomenon.

In her short stories, Blixen uses multi-level markers indicating an opportunity for the reader to engage in a reflective dialogue with other texts and plots. The pre-texts are introduced through a system of mark-

ers: the identified cited texts or stories, the characters' names, identical attributes, similarity of the characters' appearance, and similarity or contrast with the storyline of the other unidentified text.

The main text, the reference, to which is most obviously present in "The Bear and the Kiss" is Schiller's ballad "The Glove". The discussion and analysis of the ballad's conflict take up three pages at the very beginning of the story. A special focus here is on the knight's feat performed for the sake of his fair lady's whim and on the lady, who commands her knight to perform a feat. During the discussion, the young engineers fail to agree on whether Kunigunde deserved a glove to be thrown in her face or whether the knight Delorges missed his chance. The situation described by Schiller gets an unexpected interpretation by the young participant of the later events: he argues that by behaving in this manner the knight sets himself up for loneliness and will remain in the minnesingers' memory as someone who throws a glove in the lady's face and that he could have given her a kiss.

Reflected in this interpretation of Schiller's text, the events of the short story receive a new interpretation later — as a mirror-image action. The Knight (Bjørn) sets off to hunt a supposedly non-existing bear for the sake of the Lady (Lahula). Upon his return, he gives her a kiss and gets one back. At the same time, he acquires valor and, probably, a creative power as Joshua himself many years before.

The fact that the events of the short story should be interpreted in the light of the argument with Schiller's text is confirmed by the very last sentence of Blixen's text: "But who would write a ballad? — Well, that is just it..." (*Hvem skal digte den? Ja, det er det.*) [Blixen, 1994, p. 391].

The second pre-text directly indicated in "The Bear and the Kiss" is the saga of Olaf Tryggvason. The similarity between one of the main characters of the short story and that of the saga is repeatedly emphasized: it is the strength that equals the strength of 12 bears, hunting feats, success with women, valor in battles, recklessness, and fearlessness while saving the sinking sailors. An important element of the story about Joshua is his disappearance. He sails off as a saga hero to remain only in legends and rumors.

Schiller's text and the saga have one very important common point for the short story — a glove as an attribute. Knight Delorges throws a glove in Kunigunde's face and King Olaf strikes Sigrid the Haughty

with a glove for her refusal to convert to Christianity and marry him. King Olaf from the saga paid for this strike with his life and Sigrid the Haughty turned out to be guilty of his death. This is one of the possible scenarios in the story: the farmstead hostess nags the young engineer to go hunt an evil bear who has an external likeness to the host.

A glove as an attribute of witchcraft appears in one more saga, “Böðvars þáttur”, where the Finnish witch stepmother uses a glove to turn her stepson Bjørn into a werewolf. Finally, a glove appears in Bjørnson’s play of the same name in 1883 (the same year as the events described in the short story) where it is a girl who throws a glove in her fiancé’s face challenging all the existing public patriarchal norms in family relations. Thus, the author makes the similar repeating plot twists enter an ironic dialogue in the context of the inter-textual dispute about universality in the male-female relationship.

The most obvious markers provoking the reader’s reflection are the names of the main characters. In the Danish original text there is a man named Josva, whose name is translated as Joshua in the English version. Both variations refer to a hero, a warrior, and a leader of the Jews, and also the author of one of the books of the Old Testament — the Book of Joshua. He also has another name (f. ex. in King James Bible of 1611) if transliterated from the Greek. According to this tradition, Joshua-Josva is called Jesus son of Naue. There is also long theological tradition of accepting Joshua as a forerunner of Jesus Christ.

That is why the fact, that in “The Bear and the Kiss” Joshua-Josva is married to a Finnish woman Lahula who was baptized by the name of Mary Magdalene, gives rise to an ironic, typically Blixenian, somewhat blasphemous association with Jesus Christ, who, according to one of the Apocrypha, was married to Mary Magdalene.

The name Bjørn is associated with a bear, an ancient totem animal related to berserks — bear warriors. In addition, Bjørn is the name of the stepson of Queen Hvit from Böðvars þáttur in Hrólfr Kraki’s saga. In that very saga we find a character named Böðvar Bjarki whose nickname meant exactly a “little bear” and it is the very name of Blixen’s main character — he is being teased as “a little, thin bear” (*en lille tynd bjørn*) [Blixen, 1994, p.361]. Finally, the name Bjørn can bring about associations with the name of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, the author of the song about Olaf Trygvason to which we find other references in the text and “The Glove”.

Among other markers in the writer's text, we find comparisons with various historical and mythological heroes. Thus, in the short story Joshua is compared to Olaf Tryggvason, he is used as a model for the hero's portrait. Besides, the text provides several archetypal patterns to explain the possible relations between Joshua and Lahula. The young travelers compare them with Calypso and Laertiádēs (Odysseus) thus validating the possibility of interpreting the relations between the spouses as those of captivity: a strong and handsome man-hero taken captive by a witch. Such an interpretation is reinforced by Joshua's comparison with Fenrisúlfr (Fenris-wolf) who, according to the legend, was captured by the Æsir who tied him up with a chain made of cat's steps, a woman's beard, and a bird's saliva. Yet, the farmstead guests think that one day the host will break the spell and leave the witch.

The main and the most obscure character of the short story is the hostess Lahula. The series of associations related to her is considerably longer. She is the granddaughter of a Finn whose ancestor was among the sorcerers, who according to the saga, were killed by Olaf for their sorcery during the tide. Perhaps she is keeping the Olaf-like character prisoner out of revenge?

At the very beginning of the narrative on the boat, the young engineers talk about Finnish girls. Their discussion paints erotic pictures of naked Finnish girls riding bears who are completely in their power at night, while during the day they sell reindeer cheese and embroidery. They appear attractive and dangerous for men. As an example, they mention the names of Gunhild and Snefrid from the Harald Fairhair saga. According to the saga, Gunhild, the wife of Eric Bloodaxe, learned sorcery from the Finns and abetted her husband to commit many evil deeds. Snefrid is a Finnish witch to whom Harald Fairhair was married. In the saga he was so bewitched by her that after her death he was unable to fulfill his kingly duties and waited for her to come back to life again. These saga characters invoke erotic attractiveness, magic beauty, sorcery, and villainy of the Finnish women and, therefore, these traits can also be true for the farmstead hostess. However, Lahula's appearance is a complete opposite of the Finnish women's fame: her hunched figure, her voice resembling a cat's meowing, her wheezing and whistling bring about associations with the sea witch from Andersen's "Mermaid". The description of the dinner only reinforces this likeness: "they were received in the sea cave or the pal-

ace of the witch" (*i selve heksens undersøiske hule eller palads*) [Blixen, 1994, p. 376].

Another type of markers that are typical of Blixen's narrative structure is the storyline of an unidentified text that unfolds in the short story in a similar or opposite way. This technique is quite common for her short stories. The role of a mirror is frequently used, for example, by Søren Kierkegaard in *The Seducer's Diary* for *Ehrengard*, and Guy de Maupassant's "Boule de Suif" for "Heloise". According to Else Brundbjerg, *Kristin Lavransdatter* by Sigrid Unset plays a similar role for "The Ring" and Henrik Ibsen's "Love's Comedy" for "The Perls".

For the short story under consideration, such a mirror is the plooof the "Böðvars þáttur". It is not explicitly indicated in the text of the story, but its events unfold in a similar manner. In the saga the witch Queen turns her stepson into a bear after he rejects her love. The name of King Hringr's son is Björn. In the short story, erotic chemistry also emerges between the old hostess and the young engineer. Thus, looking at the young man's thick hair Lahula says: "Now there is something for a girl to pull at, in bed" (*Der er noget for en pige at rykke i, i en seng.*) [Blixen, 1994, p. 378]. The theme of a bear hunt acquires a new perspective: in the saga the witch Queen is trying to seduce her stepson and then turns him into a beast, after which she abets the King to go hunt and kill the bear, his son, to later cook his meat. The bear's son Böðvar from the saga kills the witch to avenge for the death of his father-bear.

The fate of the Finnish witches from the sagas told in the Christian era ends poorly: Queen Hvit is killed and the dead Snefrid is decomposing. In contrast, Lahula becomes a source of inspiration for the young engineer. A witch, according to Blixen's mythology is someone who inspires a deed and a song.

Thus, by paraphrasing the saga of Olaf Tryggvason, Blixen created a story where the character ends up being married to a Finnish witch, being inspired in his deeds by the woman of whom he is jealous because of her attention to the young engineer who can take his place.

In the short story, the main intrigue of the Lahula — Joshua — Björn triangle is all about which bear the hostess abets to hunt. Both men can die, both can turn into a bear: Björn, if he is enchanted by the hostess and Joshua, who is probably a werebear already. Remarkably, when describing the horrible bear, the hostess uses Joshua's features: old, evil, one-legged, and extremely dangerous. On the other hand, a fight with the bear can

end in a tragedy: Lahula hints to this by telling a story about a boy in a red scarf who was killed by a bear. Having told this story, she ties a red scarf on the young man. The host who first claims that there is no bear in the forest, later says to Lahula: “If he meets the bear you will never see him again” (*Hvis han møder bjørnen, så ser du ham aldrig levende igen.*) [Blixen, 1994, p.381]. The similarity between the two men in the short story is emphasized because it looks like the bear hunt has the same impact on them: they both start telling stories. Joshua talks about the seven bears he killed and Bjørn tells stories that have witches as a motive. Another man in the text, who seems to know Lahula and was in love with her at the time of Joshua’s legendary deeds, is the captain from the ship. It is he who is the narrator about Joshua’s deeds from the past and his marriage to Lahula. He also possesses the gift of storytelling and admits having once felt so jealous that he almost killed a man (probably Joshua).

Further in the “Böðvars þáttur” we read about the deeds of the bear’s son and about the young Viking overcoming his fear in a mock dragon hunt. Bravery is what Bjørn attains after the unsuccessful hunt in Blixen’s story.

The main storyline around which the whole narrative is centered is the story of a werebear, a shapeshifter who takes up a variety of different guises in folktales. The bear hunt and bear killing abetted by the witch Lahula is a kind of initiation for overcoming the fear and attaining the power and art of storytelling. But another storyline that emerges as a result of communication between various pre-texts could be an ironic discussion about male-female relationships where the woman plays the role of turning the man, through love and jealousy, into a hero deserving of a song, ballad, or a story.

Thus, the inter-textual links in Blixen’s text serve as a storyline engine hinting to the underlying implicit background and give rise to some circling around the truth as well as the ideal pattern without naming it directly. The links also place the story in the context of the entire literary tradition resembling the Neoplatonic strategy of correspondences in Symbolism.

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Анастасия Ломагина

Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет

**КАРЕН БЛИКСЕН ЧИТАЕТ САГУ ОБ ОЛАФЕ ТРЮГГВАСОНЕ.
РЕЦЕПЦИЯ САГИ И ПОВЕСТВОВАТЕЛЬНЫЕ СТРАТЕГИИ
В ТЕКСТЕ НОВЕЛЛЫ «МЕДВЕДЬ И ПОЦЕЛУЙ»**

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Статья анализирует авторскую рецепцию саг, в частности Сагу об Олафе, в тексте новеллы К. Бликсен «Медведь и поцелуй» 1958 г. Основываясь на рецептивной теории В. Изера, предлагается иерархия текстов-предшественников, инкорпорированных в текст новеллы, и типология маркеров, которые «включают» взаимодействие с прецедентными текстами. Маркеры представлены именами действующих лиц, метафорами с использованием имен литературных, исторических или мифологических персонажей, атрибутами (брошенная перчатка), сюжетными линиями названных прецедентных текстов и использованных инкогнито. Анализ новеллы позволил установить, что взаимодействие с текстами-предшественниками приводит как к семантической компрессии, так и наоборот, создает в некоторых случаях эффект символистского, неоплатонического кружения вокруг события, эффект семантического зияния, где читатель или остается в неведении, относительно логической связи событий, или включается в игру создания собственной интерпретации сюжетной линии. Рассмотренная подробно авторская стратегия «кружения вокруг истины», стремление обозначить явление с помощью метафор, сравнений, художественных аналогий, в совокупности с ориентацией на философию устного повествования в понимании В. Беньямина и Э. Форстера резервирует для К. Бликсен прочное место в рядах авторов европейского модернизма.

Ключевые слова: Карен Бликсен, рецепция, исландские саги, повествовательная стратегия, интертекстуальность, В. Беньямин, Э. Форстер, эстетика символизма, Ф. Шиллер «Перчатка».

Anastasia Lomagina

PhD in Philology, Associated Professor,

St. Petersburg State University,

7–9, Universitetskaya nab., St. Petersburg, 199034, Russia

E-mail: a.lomagina@spbu.ru

Ломагина Анастасия Всеволодовна

кандидат филологических наук, доцент

Санкт-Петербургский государственный университет,

Россия, 199034, Санкт-Петербург, Университетская наб., 7–9

E-mail: a.lomagina@spbu.ru

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